

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
ASSISTANT SECRETARY

SECRET

June 15, 1959

HR-M/SG
JAG 901068
8/22/91

MEMORANDUM FOR: G - Mr. Murphy

I have consulted some of the boys and given considerable thought to the possibility of a "gimmick" which could be offered in the letter to Khrushchev. It is my considered conclusion that any such offer would be dangerous and counter-productive. In my view it is much better that the language remain as at present, with the quotation from our original proposal which can be interpreted as a position agreed by the Soviets, and with the intimation in the last paragraph that the minimum conditions are an agreed "status quo" with respect to Berlin and a reasonable agenda for a Summit conference.

I am satisfied that an offer of a limited concession of some kind would (1) undercut the five-point program presented to Gromyko in private session on June 3 by Couve on behalf of the three Powers (CAHTO 64); (2) risk taking the negotiations out of the hands of the Foreign Ministers entirely by making them a subject of continuing correspondence between Khrushchev and the President; (3) be seized upon by Khrushchev as constituting the full price to be paid for a Summit meeting; (4) to be interpreted by the Soviets as a first step down the "slippery slope".

I don't see any possibility of our offering anything specific which would be regarded by Khrushchev as sufficiently substantial to lead him to instruct Gromyko to re-enter negotiations which might lead to even additional concessions under the five-point program presently on the table or under the privately agreed possible understanding presented to Gromyko on June 8 (CAHTO 90) or under the prospective "possible final position" contained in CAHTO 109. Certainly an isolated offer to reduce the present troop levels in Berlin would not be sufficient and would involve serious problems with regard to reaction and morale of the West Berliners. Likewise a suggestion of an offer

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in fields not directly related to the current negotiations, such as an increase in exchanges, could be expected to have no result except perhaps utterly to confuse Khrushchev as to our intentions. Moreover if we were thinking of public opinion in the Western countries then it seems to me the present language is the best. A specific effort of concession in my view could only alarm the die-hards and would certainly not satisfy the wishy-washy "appeasement at any cost" types.

I accordingly reiterate my conviction that it would be a mistake to try to find any specific gimmicks to offer in this communication. It might be worthwhile however to refer specifically to our expressed willingness to negotiate as represented by the five-point program. This readiness to negotiate is implicit in the communication as it stands now but not explicit.

~~Very truly yours,~~  Roy D. Kohler

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